

numerous hurricanes of 2005, which greatly disrupted the water in the Gulf of Mexico, all previous mappings of those waters are now inaccurate. To date the only areas within the Gulf of Mexico that have been remapped are the vessel channels to allow for safe passage of ships traveling through the many ports along the Gulf. The remainder of the Gulf of Mexico must also be mapped beginning with traditional fishing grounds in order to remove debris and begin the process of surveying stocks and reestablishing this element of the economy. Mapping and debris removal is a critical safety and security precaution necessary to prevent catastrophic accidents from occurring during the upcoming fishing and boating season.

The conference agreement provides \$20,000,000 for the Office of Coast Survey to conduct scanning and mapping and coordinate with the Office of Response and Restoration for marine debris removal; \$2,000,000 for the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services to establish Physical Oceanographic Real-Time Systems along the Gulf of Mexico; \$1,000,000 for the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services to repair and replace tide gauge stations in the northern Gulf of Mexico; \$90,000,000 for the National Marine Fisheries Service to provide technical assistance to States and industry for oyster bed and shrimp ground rehabilitation and to undertake cooperative research to monitor the recovery of Gulf fisheries; and not to exceed \$5,000,000 to assist fishermen to recover from severe economic impacts due to fisheries disasters declared in 2005.

#### PROCUREMENT, ACQUISITION AND CONSTRUCTION

The conference agreement provides \$32,000,000 under this heading as proposed by the Senate, instead of \$11,800,000 as proposed by the House.

The conference agreement provides \$20,000,000 for the National Marine Fisheries Service to complete the repair and reconstruction of the NOAA science center.

The conference agreement also provides \$12,000,000 for the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations to procure a replacement emergency response mapping aircraft and sensor package to continue NOAA's capability to provide information about hurricane damage.

#### SCIENCE

##### NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

###### EXPLORATION CAPABILITIES

The conference agreement provides \$35,000,000 for repair and rehabilitation requirements at the Stennis Space Center and the Michoud Assembly Facility related to the consequences of hurricanes of the 2005 season.

#### RELATED AGENCIES

##### SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DISASTER LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The conference agreement provides \$542,000,000 for additional lending authority for the Small Business Administration's (SBA) disaster loan program, as proposed by the House and the Senate (excluding a transfer provision contained in both bills).

The conferees remain concerned about fluctuations in SBA's disaster lending subsidy estimates and will continue to monitor lending activity and expenditures. The conferees expect the SBA to provide weekly reports to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and the House Committee on Small Business containing the following information on all open disaster declarations: number of loan

applications received; number and amount of loans approved, denied, and disbursed; loan subsidy obligations; and the costs associated with administering the loan program (including salaries, travel, and information systems).

In light of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's prediction of a very active hurricane season for 2006, the conferees expect the SBA to build on the lessons learned from responding to numerous hurricanes during the 2005 season to ensure that the agency is better prepared for future disasters. The conferees expect that, no later than July 15, 2006, SBA shall submit to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and the House Committee on Small Business a report on the status of the disaster response plan for the 2006 Atlantic hurricane season.

#### CHAPTER 9

##### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

###### OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The conferees agree to House and Senate language preventing the Secretary from issuing a final rule regarding foreign control of U.S. airlines for 120 days.

##### FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

###### FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAYS

###### EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM

The conferees agree to provide \$702,362,500 for the Emergency Relief Program, instead of \$594,000,000 as proposed by the Senate. The conferees direct that funds shall be used for eligible projects identified under "Formal Requests" in the Federal Highway Administration table entitled "Emergency Relief Program Fund Requests—updated 06/06/06" with the exception of projects addressed in other provisions of this Act making amendments to Public Law 109-148 and otherwise funded in other appropriations Acts. The conferees include language that waives the \$100,000,000 per State per disaster cap for damages caused by Hurricane Dennis and by the 2004-2005 winter storms in the State of California and provides that any excess amounts may be used for other eligible projects.

###### (HIGHWAY TRUST FUND)

###### (RESCISSION)

The conference agreement includes a rescission of \$702,362,500 of the unobligated balances of funds apportioned to the states under chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code, excluding safety programs and funds set aside within the state for population areas. The conferees direct the FHWA to administer the rescission by allowing each state maximum flexibility in making adjustments among the apportioned highway programs.

##### FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

###### EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The conference agreement does not include \$200,000,000 for emergency assistance for public transportation, as proposed by the Senate. The conference agreement includes provisions proposed by the Senate waiving the state funding match requirement and allowing funds to be used for operations as a general provision. The conferees did not agree to include a provision waiving other grant requirements as proposed by the Senate. The House did not include funds or recommend waivers.

The conferees note that the City of Baton Rouge has absorbed a very large number of citizens as a result of Hurricane Katrina resulting in a significant boost in the demand for transit services. The conferees recognize the community of Baton Rouge as having

been directly impacted by Hurricane Katrina for the purpose of these transit waivers.

##### FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

###### CAPITAL GRANTS FOR RAIL LINE RELOCATION

The conferees do not agree to provide \$700,000,000 for capital grants for rail line relocation or make other amendments to title 49, United States Code, as proposed by the Senate.

###### RAILROAD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The conferees agree to report language, as proposed by the Senate, expecting that funds previously appropriated for the Deployment of Safety Overlay Technology shall be allocated for the purpose of deploying train control technology for which the Federal Railroad Administration is currently considering a product safety plan.

##### DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

###### PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

###### TENANT-BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE

The conferees do not agree to provide \$202,000,000, for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, as proposed by the Senate. The conferees agree to report language, as proposed by the Senate, directing HUD to report within 180 days on the States' efforts to address the needs of the disabled, elderly, and homeless.

###### COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

###### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

###### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The conference agreement provides \$5,200,000,000 for the Community Development Fund, as proposed by the Senate, instead of \$4,200,000,000 as proposed by the House. The conferees agree that no state shall receive more than \$4,200,000,000. The conferees further agree that not less than \$1,000,000,000 shall be available on a pro-rata basis for the repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of affordable rental housing.

The conferees agree that of this amount, \$12,000,000 is available for transfer to HUD's salaries and expenses account, of which \$7,000,000 is for the administrative costs, including IT costs, of the KDHP/DVP voucher program. The Senate proposed funds for this purpose under the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance account. The conferees agree that \$9,000,000 is available for transfer to the Office of Inspector General. In addition, the conferees agree to transfer \$6,000,000 to HUD's Working Capital Fund for the immediate enhancement of the capabilities of the Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting system by building additional electronic controls that will increase accountability while further decreasing the risk of fraud, waste, or abuse.

The conferees retain language as proposed by both the House and Senate, prohibiting the use of these funds by a State or locality as a matching requirement, share, or contribution for any other Federal program.

The conferees are aware that individuals with disabilities face unique challenges in finding accessible and affordable housing. As such, the conferees urge the states to work with HUD and the disabled community to ensure that these challenges are considered when states are developing and implementing Disaster Action plans. The conferees also urge HUD to take the necessary steps to inform the disabled community about the eligible uses of CDBG funding in addressing their needs.

###### INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

###### ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

###### ELECTION ASSISTANCE

The conferees do not agree to provide \$30,000,000 for the Election Assistance Commission, as proposed by the Senate.